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SUBJECT: INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY FRETS ABOUT JIHADI
ACTIVITIES IN PAKISTANI KASHMIR AND NATO LOC VIOLATIONS

REF: WAHLERT-SBOTO/PYATT 11/9 E-MAIL

Classified By: Charge Robert Blake, Jr. for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) This is an action request. Please see para 5.

2. (C) Indian Foreign Secretary Saran summoned the Charge on November 24 to register concern about several dimensions of international relief activities in Pakistani Kashmir. Saran's delivery of the non-paper in para 5 was low key and respectful of the fact that NATO and USAID activities in Pakistani Kashmir are humanitarian in focus. He also made clear he would be making the same points to a handful of other NATO reps in India. In this "thought you should know" context, Saran flagged three specific concerns:

-- That relief activities should not compromise India's claim to the entire princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (a legal point clearly aimed at insulating the government in the likely event this issue surfaces in the current session of Parliament).

-- GOI concern (widely echoed in the Delhi press) that ISI and the Pakistan Army are steering relief materials to jihadist groups.

-- That Pakistani and NATO helicopters are committing "large numbers" of violations of the Line of Control (LOC) and that Pakistan's DGMO is failing to provide courtesy notification of helicopter sorties that are going inside the pre-earthquake "no fly zone."

3. (C) Responding to Saran's concern about jihadist groups taking advantage of relief activities, the Charge emphasized the humanitarian focus of the US presence and the US sensitivity to the risk that terrorist groups could use the earthquake to regain ground. He added that we have shared these concerns with the Pakistani government at a senior level. To the best of our knowledge, the Charge added, no US relief has been channeled through jihadist groups. Saran welcomed this clarification, but reiterated that it "does not augur well" for the Indo-Pak peace process that the Army and ISI are actively encouraging terrorist groups to help with relief. He added, in this context, that Indian communication intercepts suggest that groups like LET see the earthquake as an opportunity "to up the ante on the Indian side."

4. (C) PolCouns addressed Saran's concerns about LOC overflight, drawing on refTel to explain that after the November 8 incident in which two US helicopters accidentally landed on the Indian side of the LOC, US forces adopted a policy of not flying within a 5 KM LOC buffer zone, in order to avoid further incidents. Saran was unaware of earlier US-India exchanges on this topic and welcomed the clarification. Separately, the Indian DGMO told DATT that he was unaware of any further US airspace violations since November 9 (separately, the MEA has promised to provide a catalogue of all airspace violations, including those involving NATO and Pakistani forces).

5. (U) Begin GOI Text:

Government of India have noted the presence of NATO and American troops in large parts of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir for carrying out relief and rehabilitation work for the victims of the earthquake that took place on 8 October 2005. We appreciate and share your humanitarian concern and, therefore, do not wish to take issue on the presence of your troops in territory that is illegally occupied by Pakistan. However, Government of India wishes to place on record their concern that the earthquake and the presence of foreign troops and relief agencies may be used by Pakistan to further international acceptance of its illegal occupation of large parts of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Government of India would like to reaffirm that the entire territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir belongs to India by virtue of the accession of this former princely State to India in accordance with the Indian Independence Act of 1947. We are also concerned that under the pretext of earthquake relief, a number of Jihadi groups which have been involved in cross-border terrorism against India, and have proven links with Al-Qaeda, are given legitimacy. This does not augur well for the future. It is important that Western

Governments and NGOs engaged in relief work do not associate themselves in any manner with such groups and avoid, directly or indirectly, to give them respectability.

16. (C) Action request: Mission would welcome any clarification we can provide to the Indian government regarding US efforts to guard against terrorist groups gaining access to and advantage from US relief in Pakistani Kashmir. We also would appreciate any updates on the LOC overflight issue, which as Saran points out, could easily provoke a security incident.

BLAKE